Here's one of a typical Thing Street property, just around the corner from MY HOUSE. Most of the houses in the neighborhood were constructed before the turn of the 19th century, for middle-class speculators, criminals who worked in the banking district, within easy commuting distance by street car.

The street cars are still running and some of their big houses have been gentrified, but most have been converted into cheesy apartments and rooming houses, for mental patients and bums like me.

The speculators are still running too....

Thing Street is one of the most mixed neighborhoods in the country, with every ethnic minority, gays (that's us), bohemians, psychiatric survivors, students, etc.

It's all so terribly confusing.

In the dead of winter you can sleep on the sidewalk in your underwear and no one will disturb you, or care....

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Porko asked Johnny if he'd noticed the tree.

Johnny asked which one? Why? He wasn't generally aware of the trees on Thing Street, although he realized there probably were some.

Trees weren't what Thing Street was famous for: crack-whores, pimps, rock-stars, consumer/survivors of the Ministry of Asylums and Casinos, etc.

They were why he'd had to prune the tree in the first place, since they transacted business in its shade, and hid behind its branches when the cops cruised by.

They were indignant at the mutilation of their shelter, for every numbered branch of which Porko was now liable for a considerable penalty from the Commissar of Shrubs and Camouflage for Enterprising Youth.

They left messages on that dignitary's voice-mail, informing him anonymously countless times of this latest outrage by Citizen Hearse, his agent, and a carefully hand-chosen crew of mercenary goons.

The latter met Porko at THE DROP INN, where he paid them off in cigarettes.

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He met Bruce on Thing Street, outside THE DROP INN. They walked home. It wasn't far. Emile Durkheim was right next door. Bruce said he wanted to ask Johnny a question. He wanted to know if